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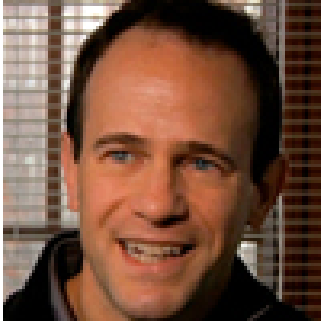
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Reflecting on 9/11

09.07.2011 | Culture and Society, Hot Topics Meaningful conversations and journal writing can help people make the most of their commemoration of the 10th anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks, according to a University of Dayton psychology professor.

"Modern life doesn't allow for much reflection. Anniversaries are a good time for it, whether it's a tragic or a happy anniversary," said Jack Bauer, Roesch Chair in the Social Sciences and associate professor of psychology. "Without reflection from time to time, we're just running on our same old assumptions. When approached with a constructive mindset, a conversation can lead

to a better understanding of ourselves and our world."

Research has shown that activity — having a conversation or writing about tragic events — is more beneficial than simply thinking about them, Bauer said. For many, this doesn't always come easy, so he offers the following questions to help stimulate purposeful reflection.

- **Overall personal:** How has 9/11 affected your life? Did it shape or otherwise affect your: career goals, relationships, personal interests, political views, religious beliefs, beliefs about human nature or about what makes up a good life?
- **Overall society:** In general, what do you think has happened to society since 9/11? In what specific ways have things become worse? In what ways have things improved? Can any of these changes be attributed to what happened on 9/11?
- **Priorities:** Sometimes tragedies make us focus on matters of personal meaning, of what's most important in life. Do you focus on things that matter most more now than before 9/11? Does such a change have any tie to 9/11, or is it more a matter of your own personal development?
- **Politics:** Have other nations' attitudes toward the U.S. changed in the past 10 years? Has the United States' attitude toward other nations changed? Have your attitudes toward other nations changed? Toward the U.S.?
- **Religion:** Since 9/11, have you changed your views on: the world's religions, your own religion, Islam and Christianity, the role of religion in government?
- **Media:** Do you seek information from news sources more now than before 9/11? What are those sources? Do you actively seek news sources from both sides of the political spectrum (liberal and conservative)? Do you primarily read (or listen to) sources that are known to favor one side?
- **Security:** Are you more focused now on personal exploration and growth or on safety and security since 9/11?
- **Public service:** Are you more involved or less involved in community/civic service than you were before 9/11?
- **Relationships:** Who has come into your life in the last 10 years? Who has left it? How do you view these people's influence in your life?

Bauer studies how people use their life stories to create self-identities and to cultivate meaning in life, wisdom and happiness. He is co-editor of a book called *Transcending Self-Interest: Psychological Explorations of the Quiet Ego*. Contact him at 937-229-2617 or jack.bauer@udayton.edu.

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